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FOLLY, INFAMY, AND MISERY

OF

UNLAWFUL PLEASURE.

-A

S E R M O N

Preached before the GENERAL ASSEMBLY
of the CHURCH of SCOTLAND, May 25.
1760.

By JAMES FORDYCE, D.D.

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The FOURTH EDITION.

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TO
HIS GRACE
CHARLES LORD CATHCART,
HIS MAJESTY'S HIGH COMMISSIONER

TO
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, MAY M,DCC,LX;

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE,
PREACHED BEFORE HIS GRACE,

AND

PUBLISHED AT HIS DESIRE,

IS,

IN TESTIMONY

OF THAT ESTEEM

WHICH IS DUE TO DISTINGUISHED VIRTUE,

AND

OF THAT GRATITUDE

WHICH PECULIAR OBLIGATIONS CLAIM,

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

JAMES FORDYCE.

NOV 27 1964

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1941

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A
S E R M O N

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Prov. vii. 7.

I LOOKED,—AND BEHELD AMONG THE
SIMPLE ONES, I DISCERNED AMONG
THE YOUTHS, A YOUNG MAN VOID
OF UNDERSTANDING.

HAVING formed a variety of resolutions
with regard to the subject on which
I should address you, my honoured
hearers, on this occasion ; having found myself
dissatisfied with them all, for one reason or
another ; and having felt a growing apprehen-
sion, that the very great respect to which this
audience is intitled, would not leave me suf-
ficient recollection and presence of mind to
explain myself in so easy, free, and natural a
manner, upon a particular argument that struck
me ;

me ; I at length determined, contrary to my first intention, to read to you a discourse, which, I am afraid, may appear less proper, but which, I am persuaded, cannot be deemed improper in an age of domineering pleasure, like this ; an age, that amidst many valuable improvements in arts and sciences, and many high exertions of civil and military virtue, which distinguish it, doth still retain too much of that luxury and effeminacy which some serious writers, and many serious men, have ranked amongst its characteristic features.

THE very lively and affecting passage, of which our text is a part, I leave to your attentive perusal and pious reflection, when you go home. Let it suffice to observe in the mean time, that it presents us with the most striking picture, which perhaps is any where to be met with, of a young man ensnared by the blandishments of an abandoned, but artful woman, into whose evening-walks he had thrown himself, with a fatal purpose, as it should seem, to indulge the impulse of his passions, under the covert of night, esteeming that the fittest season for those works of darkness. The character which our divine proverbialist gives of this unhappy youth, is strongly pointed, and merits our particular attention : “ I looked and behold,” saith he, “ among the simple ones I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding.” A character, which, viewed in the connection wherein it stands, will, I doubt not, on a little consideration,

tion, appear exceeding just. To prove it such, by entering into the detail, and to apply it, as indeed it is but too applicable, to those young persons of the present age, who are seduced into the purlieus of criminal indulgence, and trained on by the enticements of evil communication, will, with God's assistance, be the business of the following address. How happy should the preacher account himself, if any thing that shall be suggested might be useful, by God's blessing, either to recover, were it but one youth, who hath been entangled by that wheedling, pernicious prostitute, called, by the world's courtesy, *Pleasure*, or to guard the unexperienced and unwary part of this congregation, who may be in danger from her deadly snares! Now I will endeavour to demonstrate, that the young man, who gives himself over to voluptuousness, is really void of understanding, inasmuch as he wants taste in what belongs to genuine pleasure; sentiment in what relates to true glory; and prudence in point of his most important interests.

I. I will shew that he wants taste in what belongs to genuine pleasure, that is, on the very subject which he pretends to understand best, and where he even piques himself on the supposed superiority of his skill. Suffer me, my unglorious hearer, whoever you are, whom this discourse doth chiefly concern, to convince you how much you are mistaken in your favourite system, by shewing that the uncontrolled gratification of your appetites deprives you of the
very

very satisfaction you aim at, robs you of a thousand delights of a much higher relish, and exposeth you to innumerable pains, which far overbalance the pleasures you are so fond of.

1. I say that the unbridled pursuit of sensual enjoyments defeats its own intention. Such is the wise and righteous appointment of Providence, to deter men from dishonouring their Maker, and themselves, that excess of every kind, and this especially, destroys the very end it seeks, hurts the body as well as the mind, and disappoints the benevolent purposes of nature, by going beyond them. I appeal, my friend, to your own experience: Do not you feel your constitution impaired and dulled by a course of intemperance? Are you not forced, if you will continue the chase you are engaged in, to spur your jaded desires, by all the methods which fancy, variety, and a super-refined luxury can furnish? These indeed may serve to inflame your passions; but, alas! the more they are inflamed, the farther are they from being satisfied. New objects may excite new propensities; but the diversity of the one doth not keep pace with the violence of the other. The rage of pleasure grows, but the sense of it diminisheth; till at last you do not so properly pursue it, as you are dragged along by it. The attachment and liking to it are in a great measure soon over: Mere use and habit hurry you headlong. It is possible indeed you set out with resolutions of restraining yourself within

within certain fancied bounds of sobriety and prudence, of preserving a sort of œconomy and coolness, in the indulgence of your inclinations. Have you adhered to these resolutions? Have you practised this self-command for any space of time? Is your bent to sinful gratifications no stronger now, than when you first gave way to them? Can you still stop, when and where you please? Can you say to the incroaching current of passion, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther?" Ah the vanity and illusion that are inseparable from sin, the self-deceit and folly of sinners! to think that they can transgress with safety the boundaries of innocence, or answer for themselves, that having once entered on the declivity of vice, they shall not slide into a quicker and quicker progress, till at length they sink into all "the superfluity of naughtiness."

NOTHING more common than for the sons of intemperance to boast of their reason, their refinement, their sentiments, and the like. But have they cause to do so? Your brethren of the stall and of the forest eat and drink, and play, and gratify the appetites of nature, in due season, measure, and proportion. Therefore they are well and happy, according to their rank. Thou who art called a man, canst not pretend to so much order and felicity.

THE persons whose character I draw, are proud to style themselves *men of pleasure*. The world adopts the phrase, and bestows it on them freely: But I aver they do not deserve

this title. You are mere *sensation-men*; you are strangers to sincere, to real pleasure. That consists in regularity, and dwells with innocence alone. Figure a young man master of his passions, diligent in business, or assiduous in study, smitten with the charms of truth, of friendship, of virtue, of devotion, following their divine attraction through the slippery paths of youth, and in due time entering, with judgment and choice, into that honourable state which heaven has ordained for the support and comfort of mankind. Will those ungodly men, who forego the chaste and heart-felt delights of this amiable connection, for the bought smiles and mercenary caresses of a harlot, "loveless, joyless, unendeared," pretend to equal these latter to the former, or once to compare their lawless, restless, selfish pursuits, to the tranquil, the virtuous, the generous joys of an union, which, when wisely formed, is founded on esteem, supported with fidelity, sanctified by faith, and sweetened by mutual sympathy, trust, and complacence?

2. I will not attempt to enumerate all the superior gratifications which are forfeited by an irregular life: But surely this is a farther consideration worthy your regard. Surely a sound mind in a healthful body, moderate desires, and quiet passions, a spirit calm and clear, unobscured by the fumes of intemperance, and undisturbed by the tumults of lust, peaceful and pleasant reflections on a discreet and honourable conduct, manly, rational, and useful

useful conversation, the society, the applause, and the patronage of the best men, the humble, yet triumphant hope of the friendship of God through every future period, with all the solid and sublime consolations of devotion; surely these are not things to be rashly renounced, or lightly esteemed. If you are so unfortunate as to be a stranger to these things, will it follow that you may boldly condemn or neglect them? Because you are blind, will you take upon you to say, that light is not sweet, or that it is not "a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun?" If these are not blessings, and blessings too of inestimable value, why have they been so highly prized, so pathetically recommended, so ardently sought, so diligently, zealously, and perseveringly cultivated, by the learnedest, the wisest, and the greatest men of every age, who have been ready to undertake any thing, to suffer any thing, to sacrifice any thing, rather than forego these sweetest and noblest enjoyments? But I will submit the question to yourself; let your own understanding judge whether the enjoyments of the mind and of the heart do not bid fair to be the sweetest, because the noblest. You are a man, and will you say, that the distinguishing characteristic pleasures of a man, I mean, those of reason, of conscience, and of affection, are not better, or more estimable, than the pleasures of an animal, I mean, those of sense and appetite? What? will you give up at once, even in speculation, all the dignity and superior excellence

excellence of your nature, in order to justify to yourself the deplorable perversion of your taste! But in vain do you labour to justify it even to yourself. There is, I know there is, something within you, that takes part with uncorrupted nature, and reclaims against the vile abuse. There is something within you, which tells you, at this very moment, you are unhappy, in having forfeited those substantial and sacred joys I lately mentioned, for I know not what fantastic, frivolous, and mean indulgences. I refer the cause to your most intimate feelings. Have you not often secretly sighed to think what you lost, when you lost your innocence? When you look back on the lovely, joyous scenes of childhood and early youth, before your mind was debauched and distempered by guilty pleasures, do you not inwardly wish you could recal those blessed days, at least that you could regain the peace and ease, and gaiety of heart you then possessed? When you see other young persons of decent characters, and irreproachable morals, chearful, lively, healthy, satisfied in themselves, and beloved by all about them, do not you envy their happy destiny, and feel on the comparison how miserable you are? In such a view, do you not both despise and hate yourself at bottom, for the folly and futility of your conduct?

I am sufficiently aware, that amidst your hours of giddy riot, in the circle of your mad companions, you will be false enough to disguise any such feelings, bold enough to deny
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even the deepest convictions of your soul, to boast what a charming life you lead, and in the height of your pride to talk with pity of the sons of virtue, as a set of poor, gloomy-minded creatures. And pray let us hear wherein you have such mighty advantage over them? Why, you have the pleasure of often getting drunk in the tavern, of frequently revelling in the brothel, perhaps of violating and defiling the marriage-bed, possibly of seducing and ruining credulous innocence, probably of gaming away your own fortune, credit, and peace, or those of others whom you call your friends; the pleasure too, no doubt, of laughing at the laws of your country, at the religion of your fathers, at those rules of decency and virtue which sober Heathens themselves revere; at all serious men, nay at every body that will not run with you into the same excess of riot; and, for aught I know, the pleasure of directly blaspheming him that made you. Great God! what outrages against nature, society, and thee, are daily committed by those, who bursting the bounds thou hast so wisely and mercifully set them, reverse the use of thy creatures, disturb the order of thy world, and having done all they can to deface and destroy the beauty of thy creation, both within and without them, turn at last their impious fury on thy tremendous Majesty! These, these are the men, who talk so loud, and so big of pleasure, which they would wholly appropriate to themselves, as if they alone enjoyed and understood it. But
however

however you may rave, Sirs, in your fits of delirium, we believe your hearts suggest a different language in your sober intervals; and sober intervals you will and must have. A man cannot be always in the tavern, nor always in the stews, nor always in company; and when he comes to himself, and is alone, reason will reflect, and conscience will feel: And would such a man but speak out his feelings, and his reflections, you would find them—ah how sad! How would you hear him reproach, if not curse himself, for the desperate madness of sacrificing to the momentary, muddy, gross indulgences of a sensual life, which consist chiefly of a violent agitation of the blood and spirits, which cloy the fancy by repetition, pall more and more every day upon the senses, in short, exhaust and weary the appetites, instead of soothing and delighting them, and are totally insignificant in seasons of weakness and distress; sacrificing to these, I say, the pure, the masculine, the celestial, the immortal pleasures of a wise and pious life; pleasures that never tire, that never fail, that never decay, but, on the contrary, receive fresh lustre, and growing improvement from familiarity, from recollection, nay from accidents, from age, from affliction itself! Are you conscious of no such uneasy feelings or reflections as these, you, to whom I am particularly addressing myself on this occasion? If you are, must you not confess, that the pains which accompany a course like yours, though they were no other than those of the mind,

mind, do far overbalance the pleasures you are so fond of? That was,

3. OUR next consideration; and you will give me leave to insist upon it, as a point of great importance in this argument. You will give me leave to ask you in sober sadness, as a sincere wellwisher of yours, that would willingly set you right in what highly concerns you, whether, even in the hurry of your unhallowed pursuits, you find that satisfaction and self-complacence you are so apt to boast of; whether you do not perceive at certain moments some inward monitor whispering to you, "Do not this great evil, and sin against God," pleading with you to have mercy upon your own soul, pointing out your danger, and, like an angel with a drawn sword placed across your way, striving to stop you in your wild career? Do not these remonstrances, though insufficient it seems to answer that end, give you however very disagreeable checks, which lessen greatly the gratifications you expected? Do not those gratifications, when you think you have them, and hold them fast, vanish in an instant from your eager grasp, and leave nothing but a cloud behind them? I am mistaken in this last particular; it were well if they left nothing more, if they proved at worst but airy phantoms, that amused for a little, disappeared, and were forgotten. Confess, you who best know, what disgusts attend the disappointment; what satiety, what bitterness, what vexations follow; what cutting remorses for the past, what fearful forebodings

forebodings for the future, what secret horrors of conscious guilt do then haunt you, flashing like so many spectres on your fancy, whilst all is dark, dark, and desolate within you. What say you, my friends? do you deny it? If you do, then tell us, what mean that restlessness and uneasiness you so often betray on the back of your debauches? Why do you not sit down and review, with serenity and inward approbation, the part you have acted? Why do you shun retirement and self-inspection? What makes you fly from yourselves, and your own thoughts, to company, to diversion, to noise, to dissipation of every kind? What is it you want to lose there? Lay your hands upon your hearts, and answer honestly. Is it not the severe remembrance of your crimes and disorders, which you wish to shake off by that expedient? You know it is. And will any man in earnest, affirm, that those indulgences deserve the honourable name of *Pleasure*, which cannot bear to be calmly reflected on, which reason will not approve, and on which conscience refuseth to bestow her sacred sanction?

WHAT shall I say farther on this head, or how paint the train of mischiefs, and of furies that follow the wicked inchantress, whose hollowness and worthlessness I am endeavouring to expose? What shall I say of those diseases, that rottenness, those tortures, which her deluded votaries often suffer in their bodies; those perplexities, that agitation, those jealousies, that envy, those resentments, that almost always tear

in pieces their minds ; with the infinite caprices, reproaches, insolence, and imprecations. which they must often swallow from the wretched creatures, who are their accomplices in vice, who, along with the sweet innocence and charming modesty that become their sex, have laid aside its delicacy, its softness, and all its gentlest graces ? What shall I say of the self-accusation that dissolute men must needs feel on account of the foolish and fruitless expence, in which a life of this kind doth unavoidably involve them, from the endless inconveniences they draw upon themselves ; from the desperate courses to which they are often driven, in order to support their prodigality, or to repair the ruins of a broken fortune ; from the complicated distress they bring upon their parents, families, and friends, which cannot but recoil upon themselves, if they have any sparks of ingenuity remaining ; and finally, from the challenges, the censures, and the infamy they inevitably incur by a behaviour so blameable, and so base ? Suffice it to have just mentioned these particulars, without entering into a minute description of them ; the reverence I feel for the virtuous part of this auditory forbids me to pain them by dwelling on scenes that are too shocking. But the last-mentioned particular leads me to the second point, which was,

II. To shew, that persons of the character now under consideration, are void of understanding, in as much they want sentiments

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of

of true glory. I do not say, that they have lost all inward sense of honour and disgrace.

I am persuaded the number of those who are so perfectly hardened and flagitious is in comparison but small. Conscience may be shamefully suppressed and overlaid. It often is. But I do hope, it is seldom, very seldom quite subdued, or extinguished. In some wretches who are manifestly given up of just heaven "to a reprobate mind, to work all uncleanness with greediness, it may be seared as with a hot iron, so as to be past feeling." But, I repeat it again, such total insensibility, such callousness of soul, is probably very rare. With regard to the generality of sensualists, it may be affirmed, that they have not hitherto been able to overcome wholly, whatever they may pretend, that internal perception of praise and of blame, which is so deeply inwrought in the human mind. I need not tell you, for what wise and excellent purposes it was given. They are abundantly apparent. Nevertheless it may be asked with respect to those unhappy men in too many instances, "Were they ashamed, when they committed abomination? They were not ashamed, neither did they blush. They have hardened their faces as flint; they declare their sin as Sodom; they even glory in their shame." Doubtless it requires some time thus far to conquer the modesty of nature. But the sad conquest may be gained.

A young man enters into forbidden paths with a trembling step. The principles of his
creation

creation shrink back from the horrors of vice. He reddens at the thought of his first deviation from Virtue. He yet reveres that heavenly form. He starts at the appearance of her worthless rival. But, "beguiled by her much fair speech," to use the style of our inspired author, impelled by the desire of what is prohibited, instigated very probably by evil companions who have got before him, betrayed by the deceitfulness of his heart working on the simplicity of his youth, he ventures forward, he is led on insensibly, his appetites take fire as he advanceth, his sense of right and wrong becomes less quick and urgent, conscience is but little heard, and less regarded, amidst the tumult of company, and the clamour of the passions.

Its admonitions and reprimands proving officious and troublesome, as they naturally will do in this situation, meet at length with such unkind reception and violent opposition, that, in many cases, where it was wont to raise its awful voice, it ceases very much "to be a reprover." The Syren song of false pleasure, that prophesieth smoother things, is listened to with greedy attention. The most corrupt and corrupting maxims are collected from every quarter, received with admiration, and entertained with transport. Every witling, that can break a miserable jest on revelation and its friends, is sure of audience and applause. Those execrable books that are calculated to inflame and pollute the imagination, and which are the dishonour and the pest of the age, with what curiosity are they

they fought, with what rapture perused? Such writings of the infidel tribe, as contain the most audacious sarcasms against whatever is serious and sober, and tend most directly to subvert the foundations of all religion and morality, are cried up as the very quintessence of wit and humour, and the only standards of ingenious controversy, and fine composition. Is it any wonder, if the poor youth I have described is by this time intoxicated with the cup of folly, administered to him by so many hands; if he grows bold in wickedness; if from "walking in the counsel of ungodly men, and standing in the way of sinners," he proceeds at last "to sit in the chair of the scornful," to erect himself into the boasted character of a freethinker, to laugh amongst his compeers at religion, and law, and decency itself, to represent those who retain and testify a regard for these, as dastardly, low, and little souls, shackled by the prejudices of education, controlled by the craft of politicians, over-reached by the tricks, and overawed by the terrors of priests, and, finally, to applaud himself and his companions as the only men of spirit and vivacity, who have gloriously broke asunder those vulgar bands, and asserted the original privileges of nature? Deluded man! how little cause you have for all this vaunting? Pray consider, and say in sad truth, whether you deserve so much praise for a behaviour that degrades your nature, destroys your usefulness, injures your neighbour, dishonours your Maker, contradicts the judgment and practice of all the wise

wise and good, and counteracts the conviction of your own mind. I say,

1. THAT your behaviour degrades your nature. You talk of asserting her original privileges. But can you seriously believe that the proper rights of a reasonable being consist in acting against reason, that heaven-descended principle, which raiseth a man above a brute? Did your kind Creator "make you wiser than the beasts of the field, and teach you more knowledge than the fowls of heaven," only that you might have it in your power to sink yourself to their level, or rather beneath it? Did he render you capable of the pleasures of knowledge, of goodness, of piety, only that you might have an opportunity of preferring the pleasures of sense and passion? Did he form you for another world, that you might shew the bravery of neglecting it, and the hardness of sacrificing immortal perfection and happiness to a little present, passing gratification; I always thought that the voice of honour called men upward, taught them to aspire, prompted them to raise their fame by doing something great and excellent, and, if possible, above their station, rather than below it. But you, it seems, would have us to believe it nobler to descend, and hold it better to live and die like a beast, than to climb the ascent of thought and virtue, and, by behaving like a man, to become in due time like an angel. When you have thus debased and embruted every divine faculty, will you still lay claim, and on that very

ry account perhaps, to reason, to refinement, to superiority of sentiment? What inconsistency, what extravagance is here! But again,

2. LET me remind you, that, by being devoted to sensuality, you destroy your usefulness and significance in life. Your constitution is weakened, if not ruined; your spirit is enervated, if not dissolved, and lost for ever; the native vigour and sprightliness of youth are melted down, and absorbed in debauchery. That generous ambition, which beyond any thing on earth, incites to worthy deeds, is extinguished in low and inglorious indulgences. Study hath little relish; business is a burden; application of every kind is insupportable; all is dissipation, debility, indolence, trifling; nothing manly, firm, or resolved remains. Is this the road to real honour? But farther,

3. BY persevering in such a course, you cannot fail to be injurious as well as useless to mankind. You are injurious by being useless. Society has a claim on every man: It is entitled to the labour of his head, or of his hands, or both: He is bound to benefit others by his good offices, and to edify them by his good example. Therefore you would be unjust to the world, were you barely to shut yourself up from its intercourse, and to neglect its interests. But if, living in it, you act in such a manner as directly to hurt these interests, and turn that intercourse into an occasion of corruption to those you converse with, are you not guilty of a double injury? You not only do no good; you do much harm. You not only deprive the public,

public, and your friends, of that exertion of your powers, and improvement of your opportunities, for the satisfaction and advantage of both, which they have a right to expect, but which are either wholly obstructed, or greatly hindered by a disorderly life: You make yourself a downright nuisance in society, a daily offence to virtuous men, and a stumbling-block to the weak and the unwary: You spread infection amongst your neighbours and acquaintance, the worst and deadliest kind of infection. A man that brings the plague with him is not half so dangerous. The contagion you propagate kills the souls as well as the bodies of those it seizeth.

BUT who can describe the misery you cause to those with whom you are most nearly connected, and to whom, under God, you owe the greatest obligations? For aught I know, you are born of a respectable and worthy family, the heir of a plentiful, perhaps of a noble fortune; and when you came into the world, it is very probable, your rejoicing parents blessed that bounteous Providence which gave them a man-child, and said to each other, "This
"one shall comfort us," shall be the ornament, the pride, and the stay of our house, and shall solace us amidst the infirmities of age. They watched over your infant years with inexpressible tenderness and care. As you grew in stature, you seemed to grow in wisdom. They marked with joy and exultation the opening buds of sense, and ingenuity, and worth.
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They boasted of your hopeful appearance and pretty sayings to all about them, who naturally congratulated them on the pleasing occasion. They spared no pains, they grudged no expence, to form you, as you advanced, to every quality and accomplishment that might become your birth, adorn your station, grace your family, delight your friends, and ensure, thro' the divine blessing, their future utility, reputation, and happiness. It may be that, for some time, you repaid your parental affection and labours with the strictest duty and the fairest improvements, by which you still added to their hopes. Gracious Lord! how did their hearts heave with the biggest emotions of gratitude to thee, and their eyes overflow with tears of unutterable gladness, whilst they beheld that young man in those auspicious days, setting out in the paths of glory, with an ardor that promised the happiest progress in his after course! I would willingly suppress the sequel; but in vain. Yet I need not speak it. The cruel, the killing disappointment I refer to in general, is already present to every imagination, and deeply felt by every sensible nature in this assembly. Happy those parents, happy beyond the reach of language, who know not, by their personal experience, what such a disappointment imports!—But is it nothing to you, my young hearers whom this description may answer; is it nothing to you to be a calamity to your father, “the heaviness of your “mother,” and the ungracious author of so much

much shame and grief to both, as will probably "bring down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave," if they have not already done it? Is this the way to reputation? Can you support the idea of such aggravated guilt?

4. You dishonour your Parent in heaven, the great original and end of your being and of all its capacities and opportunities, whether for improvement or pleasure. Can you forget him; forget him, did I say? Can you disobey his laws, despise his power, even insult that Majesty whom angels worship with profoundest awe? Can you treat what belongs to him, or bears the stamp of his authority, with scorn and ridicule? Can you alienate those affections and faculties, which he gave you for the purposes of piety and wisdom; habitually alienate these from their glorious destination, and pervert them to the foolishest, nay the vilest pursuits? Once more: Can you quench that ray of divinity within you, which came from heaven, and was intended to raise you thither; can you quench it in the mire of sensual indulgence, and extinguish the desires of immortality, that your Maker kindled in your bosom, by such disorders as render it your interest to "die like the beasts that perish," and to mingle for ever with the clods of the valley? Can you do these things, and by your conversation and example teach others to do them, and not be guilty of horrible ingratitude, depravation, baseness? And will you yet tell us of your sense and spirit, and yet style yourself

a man of honour? What abuse of language! Shall I mention after this,

5. THE striking opposition between your conduct and the sentiments, dispositions, and deportment of all the wise and good men that have ever existed? Need I go about to prove what is so exceeding palpable; or will you have the effrontery to affirm, that these have all been deceived, and blinded, from the beginning to this day; that all the worth and sense the world has ascribed to them, have been merely imaginary; that how much soever those amongst them who have been, or now are, most eminent in the opinion of the public, may have thought, or discoursed, or argued, or writ, in favour of virtue and religion, they have never been able to establish their reality and excellence, or to demonstrate, that there is any higher good than pleasure, the pleasure of the senses, and of the fancy; in a word, that those who have been, or now are, "the lights of the world," and the ornaments of humanity, deserve no better character than that of a company of poor, prejudiced, deluded people, the children of ignorance, and the dupes of superstition? And will you venture to aver, that a set of men, whom you call men of pleasure, whom we call Infidels, Libertines, Profligates, the Refuse and Dregs of nature, the Scourges and Plagues of mankind, the avowed enemies of God and goodness; that these abandoned men of pleasure, with their mean and miserable adherents, who

who follow them at some distance, licking up their spittle, and labouring to overtake them; I mean, many an unfortunate youth, but lately initiated in the mysteries of iniquity; that these, I say, are the only persons, who have learnt to think, and speak, and act properly, with true spirit, manhood, and sagacity? Oh! my brethren, to what a pitch of frenzy human beings are capable of arriving, when they can thus "call evil good, and good evil, put light "for darkness, and darkness for light," and dignify with titles of fame and glory opinions and actions the most infamous! But this species of frenzy, like most others, has its lucid moments; and, as we hinted before, there are sober moods every now and then recurring, when reason breaking loose from the restraint and force which obstructed its operation, will rebound upon the sinner with double vengeance, by means of that elasticity which belongs to it. He may strive to bury and extinguish under the load of intemperance the fire of conscience; but that, like embers raked up under ashes, will burst out at times, and burn up all the hay and stubble of his vain and false confidence, and shew him by its piercing light that he counteracts the conviction of his own mind; which was,

6. The last particular on this head. The next morning, for instance, after a debauch, when you are once more alone, and the fumes of the former night's intemperance are evaporated, can you look back on the scene with calm exultation, and conscious pride? Do you really

really think the better of yourself for such "revelling, and drunkenness," such "chambering and wantonness;" for mingling with prodigals, with debauchees, with gamesters, with harlots, and such like creatures, the very off-scourings of the world? Do you indeed esteem it creditable to have these for your companions? Would you have been glad to be found among them by a virtuous relation; or that any decent person of your acquaintance should have detected you sharing in their works of darkness? I trow not. Why not? Why shun the light of day, and the eye of virtue? If your works are truly honourable, why be afraid lest they should be made manifest? What is the reason that you "love darkness rather than light," if you are not inwardly convinced that "your deeds are evil," and cannot bear the awful glance of wisdom, nor the sacred inspection of the laws? For shame; a reasonable being obliged to court the twilight, to fly, like a bird of darkness, from the face of the sun, and, like the midnight-plunderer, to hide his guilty visage under the mask of secrecy. Can you stand the comparison? Do you not blush at the thought? Do you not feel yourself little and despicable at this moment? Are you not overawed by the superior presence of every worthy person you behold in this house? Are you not sensible, that you are—a slave, a very slave, the worst of all slaves, and must remain such, so long as you continue to "serve divers lusts and pleasures," which say to you, "Go, and you go; Come, and you

"you come; Do this, and you do it;" leaving you no settled rest from the dreadful drudgery, no generous, free, delightful command of yourself, but using you like a beast of burden, driving and hurrying you along thro' all the joyless, jading ways of vice and folly?

If through the repugnance of reason not yet wholly broke, or the languors of sickness, or the restraints of disease, or the remonstrances of friendship, or some other happy bar thrown in your road by a merciful Providence, you stop a little in the path of destruction, take time to cast your eye back, to reflect on your conduct, and attend to its consequences; if persisted in, how are you shocked at the horrid spectacle? What indignation against yourself ariseth within you? What abhorrence of your base accomplices? What resolutions to relinquish them for ever, and associate thenceforth with virtuous men? Then, in fine, you see, with a mixture of confusion and horror, all the deformity and infamy of false pleasure, and can enter with full conviction into the meaning of those pointed words, "What fruit had you in those things, whereof you are now ashamed?" I will suppose these salutary sentiments to continue a while, and your purposes of reformation to keep pace with them; tell me, whether in such a serious conjuncture, and such, I doubt not, you have experienced, (the case is not uncommon; I have known those that have been in it: They confessed the truth:), tell me, I say, whether you did not then perceive a certain

tain dignity of thought, a certain internal elevation above your former self, which even surprised you, and told you that purity, purity alone was proportioned to your frame; that it alone, under God, could restore your original greatness, and preserve you from sinking into your wonted debasement. If, after all these sober counsels, and those secret dawnings of peace and joy, you have suffered yourself to fall into the mire again, and plunge perhaps deeper than ever, as tho' you had only returned a little to make your run more bold and violent, what fresh dishonour, as well as guilt and sorrow, must you be conscious of incurring? And will you yet boast of the glory of your course, and give the lie to your own heart, by vaunting that you, and such as you, are alone entitled to the praise of fortitude and freedom? Blessed Maker! what a distracted creature is a young man abandoned to voluptuousness! Whatever he may pretend, he is destitute of sentiment in what relates to true glory, no less than of taste in what belongs to genuine pleasure. But he is equally devoid of prudence, as to his most important interests; which was,

III. The last point * I proposed, as the finishing proof of his being void of understanding. This indeed is at first sight so very plain a point, that it needs little more than to be proposed. The persons we are at present concerned with will not dispute, that the course they follow is not in general the road to wealth. They will allow

* This head was omitted in the delivery, to save time.

allow that the votaries of pleasure must often be content to sacrifice their fortunes on her altar; and frequently they even pique themselves on nobly despising, as they are pleased to express it, the sordid considerations of gain and credit, when these would interfere with their more elegant gratifications. Now I will not say that those considerations are of such value, as to merit being preferred to all others, or made your principal objects. No: I would rather remind you, that you were formed for much greater ones, and that the real prosperity of "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," but in obtaining the proper ends of it, which are nothing less than the glorifying God, the benefiting men, and the bettering his own immortal spirit. But I would remind you at the same time, that, in subordination and subserviency to these, reputation and success in business, a decent competency, or, if it so pleased God, an honourable affluence in life, are valuable objects and very worthy of a wise man's attention. I say, they are so in a secondary view. In such a view, "there is nothing better," saith the preacher from the throne, "than for a man to eat and drink, and make his soul enjoy good in his labour: This is from the hand of God." The same great person mentions it as an encouragement to the study of wisdom, or the practice of religion, that "length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour." We are likewise assured by a Christian

stian apostle, that "godliness is profitable for
 "all things, having the promise of the life that
 "now is, as well as of that which is to come."
 In short, we are warranted to affirm, that
 wealth well gotten, enjoyed with gratitude,
 sense, and moderation, improved in works of
 piety, friendship, and beneficence, is an im-
 portant blessing, adds greatly to a man's com-
 fort and consequence here, and will hereafter
 prove so much treasure laid up in heaven.
 May we not conclude then, that those who call
 themselves men of pleasure are fools, when
 they laugh at men of business, or speak with
 derision of the virtuous gentleman, the honest
 citizen, or the industrious farmer, as a set of
 low, plodding, drudging characters, that know
 nothing of the value or enjoyment of life?
 What will those arrogant men say, if poverty
 should "come upon them like an armed man,"
 with all the evils it brings along with it, to
 such, especially, as never felt its gripe before?
 How will you be able to bear it, ye sons of
 softness; "you that have lived in pleasure,
 "and nourished your hearts, as in a day of
 "slaughter?" With what accumulated weight
 will it fall on you, whose bodies and minds
 have been enfeebled and pampered with intem-
 perance and sloth? With what consternation,
 distraction, despair will it overwhelm you?
 How will you, that are strangers to habits of
 prudence and application, who perhaps were
 never possessed, or not thoroughly possessed,
 of any one useful art or talent for business,
 who

who probably have offended highly your best friends, and lost every degree of credit and estimation among the sober part of mankind; how will you be capable of struggling with adversity, and rescuing yourselves from it? If disease brought upon you by your disorders should add its pressure to all the rest, what will you then do? What resource then find under consumption of body, joined with consumption of fortune, sharpened by so many attendant calamities; and, pray remember, rendered intolerable by anguish of mind, the remorse, the horrors, the hideous images of misery past, present, and to come, that will rush like an host of enraged enemies upon your tortured breast? Oh terrible!—

I asked just now, what resource you will find amidst this combination of woes? I think of one, one dreadful resource. Nature shudders at the black idea. You can imagine what I mean. You have heard, I question not, the horrible system proposed, and pleaded for, at your nocturnal orgies. In those hours of madness perhaps you have applauded its patrons, studied their desperate arguments, and at last adopted an opinion, which in a Christian land must appear to men in their wits shocking to humanity, dismal as hell, and daring as its fiercest fiends. This resource those fiends, who sport with human wretchedness, have certainly contrived to make their prey, in such cases, more sure and speedy. May the merciful Father forbid you should ever fly to that fatal refuge! What

a refuge for an immortal being, to plunge himself with his own hands into the depth of damnation, in order to elude his incumbent misery!

BUT let us turn from the dismal picture, and suppose, in the next place, that a young man addicted to voluptuousness escapes the mischiefs which often overtake his brethren in iniquity, arising from a dissipated fortune, a broken reputation, incensed relations, and a ruined constitution; that he spins out a long life in a state of external ease and indulgence, amongst a set of people attached to him from different causes, perhaps fond of him for his parts, his politeness, his vivacity, or his natural goodness of temper, and that he makes shift to suppress, as much as possible, the painful convictions of a self-condemning mind; need I tell him, that old age will come at last with its unavoidable decrepitude and frailties, and these not the less surely for the freedoms he now useth with his health? This he cannot but know, however he may contrive to overlook it. And when those days of darkness overtake him, which will very probably be many, if a distemper or an accident doth not suddenly snap asunder his weakened thread; when he is made "to inherit," as the scripture speaks, "the sins of his youth," and when through the surrounding gloom he reviews a life lost in dissipation, and prostituted to sensuality, his talents by which he might have honoured God, and profited men, partly neglected, and partly abused, the remonstrances of his friends, the principles

principles of his education, the powerful checks of his own mind, the calls of religion, the warnings of providence, the secret workings of God within him, generously intended for his recovery to virtue, all these slighted and opposed; how will he bear such reflections as the following? "Now my inglorious and criminal course draws near an end: What have I gained by it? A few hours or days of giddy amusement, and guilty pleasure, often dashed with inward disgust and bitterness, always interrupted with long and tedious intervals of insipidity, languor, and dejection, at best with scenes of laboured mirth, and forced laughter, that left my heart, as they found it, heavy and sad. I have gained too the boisterous applause of worthless and witless men, like myself, for "casting in my lot with them," and participating in their impiety and debaucheries. I have gained—nothing more. And what have I lost? What have I not lost? My innocence, my honour, my character, my peace of mind, the favour of my Maker, the intellectual, the moral, the domestic, the divine joys, that sweeten and dignify existence. I have lost whatever was worth living for. I have lost—my soul. The path I have trod has been marked all along with folly, and vanity, and vexation. A few steps more, and it will land me—where?—in the place of weeping, where that wretched sensualist lift up his eyes to heaven in vain. For now, alas! it is too late to offer

“fer the great Almighty the dregs of a dissolute, polluted life, or attempt to vanquish those inveterate habits which have enslaved my soul, and taken away my heart.” In this mournful period, who, do you think, my brethren, will appear to the man I paint, truly prudent, and truly wise? The boastful votary of pleasure, or the humble worshipper of God? But,

ONCE more. Let us follow the unhappy man a little further. Let us figure him at last laid upon the bed of death, bidding adieu to his sorrowful friends, if any friends he hath, rolling his despairing eyes on every side. He looks back: His ill-spent youth, and the whole tract of his life past presents nothing to his view, but one wild waste. He looks forward; all, all is wo unutterable. He receives the sentence of death within himself. Nothing now “remains but a fearful looking for of wrath and fiery indignation to consume him.” I fancy I see the poor creature just about to shoot the irremeable gulph of death, that death he used to talk of with such an affectation of superior indifference. Oh the shudderings, the strong reluctance, the unimaginable convulsions that seize his nature, as he stands lingering on the tremendous precipice! He wishes for annihilation, which he often tried to believe in, but could never seriously be convinced of. The dreadful alternative entirely misgives him. He meditates the devouring abyfs of eternity. He recoils, as he eyes it. Alas! alas! how he struggles for life! Impotent efforts all. The
 restless

resistless decree is gone forth. He sinks in final despair. The blackness of darkness closeth round him. He feels himself undone, without one ray of hope.—Is this the man, that laughed the children of wisdom and temperance to scorn; that admired, extolled, and imitated sensualists and fots? Is he of the same opinion, think ye, at the last? Ah, how different his sentiments and language in the bower of pleasure, and on the bed of death!

DID you ever visit a dying voluptuary? Did you ask him, what were his sensations then?—“How do you feel, Sir, in the view of your approaching end? Do you still approve a voluptuous life? Would you now recommend it to those about you? Would you lead it again yourself, could health and vigour be restored?” How such questions would pain and pierce him! If he uttered his real apprehensions, with what pathetic, solemn, melting, death-inspired eloquence, would he then express his perfect detestation of the party he had chosen; would he then declare his heart-rending remorse on that account; would he then pronounce those young persons only wise, who “remembered their Creator in the days of their youth;” would he then admonish and conjure his companions and friends to fly the paths of unlawful pleasure, and betake themselves, without a moment’s delay, to the ways of wisdom and virtue!——“Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die.”

WOULD

WOULD it be reckoned an unseasonable digression from the subject, or an insupportable addition to this discourse, were I now at last to address myself to those who have more immediately committed to them the care of youth, and to my younger brethren of the clergy who are present?

1. To parents, teachers, tutors, guardians, and masters of families. Allow me, my friends, to call on you, with all the concern and solemnity which the importance of the case demands, to watch over your respective charges, as those that watch for immortal souls. To do so is not the business of the ministers of religion alone. Think, oh think! of what value and consequence so many young minds must naturally be. Think how much will necessarily depend to them, to you, to society, to religion, on the turn they shall take by times. Think what risks they run of taking a bad one, in so ensnaring an age, especially a fatal bias to licentious pleasure. Guard them on that side with particular vigilance. Be peculiarly solicitous about the books they read, the company they keep, and the friendships they form. What effects these will have upon them, it is easy to imagine; and should you neglect them with regard to these, is there not reason to fear, that all your best instructions and wisest monitions will be of little avail? They will but too readily contract a fondness for such writings, such conversation, and such intimacies, as will sooth and nourish their youthful passions, those very
passions

passions which you should endeavour to correct and moderate. Need I inform you, how delicate a task that is, and what judicious attention it will require to prevent or check the irregular sallies of young spirits, without disgusting or depressing them? A form of pleasure must needs be exhibited; something to charm their imaginations, something to captivate their hearts. The worthier and nobler sensibilities of nature must be indulged and cultivated. A feeling of true honour, the love of virtuous praise, the admiration of moral beauty, the amiable reciprocations of a refined and generous friendship, the sweet sympathies of natural affection, and domestic union, all these must be recommended and encouraged.

ABOVE all the rest, a sense of religion must be strongly inculcated, as that alone can be the ground-work of every virtue, no less than its highest finishing. But take care how you proceed in your attempts to enforce this divine principle. Beware lest you damp or overlay the minds you desire to profit. Be sure you set forth religion in all her native smiles and graces. Let her never wear, in your discourse, or manners, a forbidding countenance. That were to disguise, to misrepresent the angel, to do her infinite wrong, and those under your inspection an irreparable injury. Should you frighten them away from piety by making them fancy its spirit gloomy, or feel its exercises burdensome, they will conceive such an aversion to it, as you will never be able to conquer. Whereas,
if

if you convince them by all the arts which prudence can prompt, or sweetness suggest, that there is nothing so beautiful as the character of true goodness, nothing so delightful as its practice, and shew them in your own temper and behaviour its happy and ornamental influence; you will, by the blessing of the Most High, which you will ever implore, inspire them with the love of that heavenly power. And when that heavenly power hath taken full possession of their souls, where is the phantom of false delight that can have force to seduce and detain them?

EXPECT not however to see them perfect, or established all at once. Require not too much from their tender years. Make candid allowances for the gaiety, the giddyness, and little innocent frolics of youth. Remember you were once young. Restrain them not from a sober mirth, and decent amusements suited to their age and station. Let them plainly perceive that you are pleased to see them so, and that you are disposed to deny them nothing in your power to grant, but what would hurt them. Give no quarter to falsehood, dissingenuity, or bad passions of any kind. But let not every trifling folly excite your displeasure, or provoke your censure. Remonstrate seldom, and never in wrath, but always with great seriousness, and great firmness. In fine, if you would give them the most valuable proof of your affection, fail not to conduct them to Jesus, as the friend, the brother, and the restorer of their natures, who came down from heaven to

to lead them up thither, and guide their feet in the way of peace and joy, which is no other than the way of wisdom and of holiness. Tell them how much he loves the young, and with what gentleness "he carries the lambs in "his bosom." Cease not to assure them, that "his yoke is easy, and his burden light;" and that, if they will take these upon them cheerfully, bear them steadily, and lean with unbounded confidence on his almighty support and patronage, all shall be well. I wish it devoutly for their sake, and yours.

2. As to you, my younger brethren of the clergy; may I not hope that you will take kindly the parting counsel of one who loves you, and who will never, it is likely, have an opportunity of this sort to address you again? It would help not a little to alleviate the concern which it is natural for me to feel on removing from your society, if I might indulge the pleasing idea, that any thing I shall now offer may contribute to your usefulness, or satisfaction.

I would begin with observing, that the rising generation should be a principal object of your care. From them chiefly must arise your hopes of success in your profession. They are not yet "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin," nor hackneyed in the ways of the world:

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And

* This and the preceding address contain the substance of an extemporary effusion, which the author has endeavoured to recollect, and set down more fully and distinctly.

And being young yourselves, you can advise, admonish, and reprove them with the best grace, and the most efficacy. Your bestowing peculiar notice on them, will always give pleasure to such as are connected with them, who will, on that account, listen to your other instructions with greater advantage. Such as are not so connected will still however approve of your conduct, if they are good: and if they are otherwise, if they are grown old in iniquity, or "accustomed to do evil," can you expect "the Ethiopian should change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" Nevertheless you may be assured, that the very veterans in vice themselves will secretly applaud your endeavours to train the young to virtue and religion; so irresistibly are they led by the force of truth to admire in speculation those venerable forms, which in practice they neglect to pursue. There is not, I am convinced, in this house, a parent or a tutor so lost to every sentiment of worth, as not to wish, let their own characters be ever so foolish or so wicked, that those young persons whom nature or providence has intrusted to their inspection, may be wise and virtuous.

WHEN the younger part of your hearers discover, that they possess a particular share in your regard and labours, a distinction so obliging to them will wonderfully conciliate their esteem and confidence; and these, under God, will "open their hearts to attend to the words" that shall be spoken by you. They will hardly

hardly be able to withstand the arguments, the exhortations, the entreaties, of those whom they find so deeply concerned about their edification and welfare; more especially if you approve to their ingenuity mainly, or to that sense of truth and probity, of praise and reputation, which originally belongs to their natures, and which will always afford you a handle, whereby to take hold of their consciences, unless these should become totally obdurate. And that, it is to be hoped, will rarely be the case, so long as they are young. Such a case, I am well persuaded, would be yet more rare, if every working of modesty, every tendency to good, every the smallest shoot or sprouting of virtue were early and tenderly cherished and supported.

By commending where you can, by rebuking only where you must, by never shocking or revolting them with an ill-judged severity, whilst you never foster their pride or vanity by undeserved, undistinguishing, or extravagant applause, you will preserve a happy balance in their spirits. They will hearken to you with equal delight and reverence, as at once their friends and their teachers. And having thus engaged them to love and honour you, it is natural to think you will the more easily and effectually win them to the love and veneration of your Master.

To recommend your Master and his religion to their hearts, to all hearts, I need not say, should be your ruling ambition, and your leading

ing aim. "To know" and to preach "Christ and him crucified," was the resolution, the study, and the glory of the greatest man, and the best minister, the Christian church did ever produce. To be called a preacher of Christianity, and not to preach Christ; to bear that honourable title, and to preach Plato or Epictetus, Antoninus, or Seneca, exclusively of Christ, or preferably to him;—May God Almighty forbid that so great a contradiction, such a gross prevarication, a conduct so absurdly, so shamefully impious, should ever be chargeable on any of you! Let the philosophy of Greece and Rome have its due. Let those who taught it meet with all the approbation and respect which they deserve. And doubtless they deserve a great deal. In many instances they thought well, and wrote better. Many of their sayings concerning life, and morals, and natural theology, may be adopted with safety, and inculcated with advantage. I pity the man who affects to despise them. He betrays ignorance, or prejudice, or poorness of spirit, or all these together. But could we suppose a Christian preacher by profession, giving them the preference, in his estimation and discourses, to that truly divine philosopher, who descended from the Father of light and love to teach and to save mankind, I should pity such a man still more, as destitute alike of taste and worth, of understanding and honesty. Never, oh never! my beloved brethren, be "ashamed of the "gospel of Christ." You never can have
cause.

cause. Regard your relation to the Son of God as your greatest honour. Be willfully guilty of nothing to forfeit the felicity connected with it, or to make the Son of God ashamed of you.

LET the fond admirers of Paganism dote on a philosophy, which the experience of ages has proved defective, feeble, inefficacious; as the reason of things shews it to be perplexed with uncertainty, warpt with error, and all together disproportioned to the demands of human nature. Let us, us I say, who profess ourselves the disciples of him who lived, and taught, and died in Judea, who spake and acted as never man spake or acted, let us maintain with boldness, though with meekness too, the cause of our Master.—Think again, of what Master.—Of the sweetest and sublimest spirit, of the most enlightened, comprehensive, and penetrating mind, of the most heroic benefactor, and meritorious sufferer, in a word, of the most accomplished and dignified personage that ever appeared on the theatre of humanity!

LET us study by day and by night the philosophy of the evangelical system. It were easy to evince, that no institution, no discipline, which we are acquainted with, is adapted, like the gospel, to the frame and the state of man. This in general I will venture to affirm, that there is not in the human breast a single point of sensibility, a single spring of action, any one faculty, principle, or perception

tion relating to moral, spiritual, or eternal things, which the philosophy of Jesus Christ is not calculated to strike, to move, to direct, to govern; at the same time that the distempers, the distresses, the weaknesses, and the wants of our nature, are most wisely and generously provided for: So that the preacher who hesitates a moment to display or to press the doctrines, the motives, and the grace of the New Testament, is a stranger to his own nature, and in effect its enemy.

To display and to press these, or, in other words, to explain and to enforce the whole counsel of God, respecting the restoration of fallen man, so far as that is revealed, together with the grand, immortal truths and laws of natural religion; to do this with ability and success, is surely one of the noblest and most delightful of all employments. To acquit yourselves well here, what application, what zeal, or what energy, if rightly directed, can be too much? From what quarter should you not be willing to borrow light and aid, in the glorious art of true eloquence? You may learn it, my friends, from Tully; you may learn it from Demosthenes: I add with peculiar pleasure, you may learn it from Paul of Tarsus: I subjoin with the highest joy, you may learn it from Jesus of Nazareth.

LET it always be your care to speak to the heart, to enter into the conscience, to make men acquainted with themselves. Contemn every

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every ornament that serves not, in some shape, to the purpose of persuasion, and every species of address that doth not tend to render the hearers better or wiser. Never rest in general, or vague harangues. Such, believe me, how ingenious or elegant soever, are always "from the purpose of" preaching, a principal part "of whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as it were, the mirror up to nature, to shew virtue her own feature, vice her own image, and the very age and body of the time its form and pressure." I shall readily be pardoned for applying to this subject, with a small variation, those beautiful words of the greatest human writer in the world.

I conjure you, brethren, "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom;" never sacrifice utility or truth to shew or popularity. Let no desire of applause tempt you to spoil your discourses with affected rhetoric or vain philosophy, on the one hand, or to disgrace them with vulgarity and cant, on the other. Let no dread of bigots, however violent or numerous, deter you from holding up to the people a high standard of Christian morals. Let no respect for libertines, of what rank or parts soever, turn you aside from the simplicity of "the truth, as it is in Jesus." A virtuous Christianity, that is, genuine Christianity, is the cause of heaven. It will always bear you out. If you have felt its sacred operation, are taken with its beauty, and awed by that

that majesty which it hath derived from its author: Blessed Saviour! what fortitude and fervour in preaching it, will these inspire!

If indeed you have undergone the discipline of repentance, if you have passed the strait gate, and entered the narrow way that leads to life eternal, if the prospects which faith unfolds have opened on your illuminated eye, and that celestial Spirit who proceeds from Jesus has descended into your bosoms; what force of feeling, what depth of discernment in the best things, what unction of sentiment and language, what unstudied allurements and dignity of manner, will ordinarily accompany your performances! How clearly will you trace, and how sensibly describe, from the fund of your own experience, the movements of the soul, the measures of conscience, the salutary pains of conversion, the secret struggles of virtue, the aspirations of an advancing piety, in short, the whole rise and progress of the divine life!

LET me particularly remind you, that nothing will more assist or animate you in the exercises of the pulpit, than the devotions of the closet; provided these are humble and liberal, simple and exalted, serious and fervent. In that case, they will be—what will they be?—a rich, perennial spring of inspiration. They will diffuse through your public addresses, both to God and to man, a certain ethereal influence, that will be universally seen and felt.

felt. Oh, how different from the constraint, the formality, the frigidity, the deadness, you have sometimes witnessed!

AFTER all, let it be remembered, that the benediction of God alone can give proper power to all your ministrations. I hope you daily ask it. But remember likewise, you can only expect it in the road of righteousness. And therefore, to all your improvements, and all your exertions, fail not (I will take the liberty to say it to the whole order present), fail not to join purity of heart and sanctity of manners. Practise as much as possible the breeding of gentlemen; but never drop the character of clergymen. Between these, when truly understood, there is, I am persuaded, no incompatibility. But if there were, it is easy to see which of the two, in point of propriety and uniformity, ought to give place in your deportment. An engaging demeanour, it is certain, can never be inconsistent with clerical decorum. But where-ever the fashion of the times, or the folly of men would attempt to build either pleasure or refinement on the ruins of virtue, may we have the firmness in our behaviour, to sink the man of the world in the man of God. "Finally, brethren, farewell: "Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one "mind, live in peace, and the God of love "and peace shall be with you." Amen.

F I N I S.

Let us now discuss from the same side
the following the friends, the friends, you
have some more with us!

After all, let it be remembered that the
penetration of God alone can give proper
joy to all your institutions. I hope you
will think that but not that it will you can
only expect it in the form of a miracle.
The doctrine is a very important one and
all your efforts, I think (I will not say the
duty to fight to the water or to the ground) will
not to join duty or to the water or to the ground
here. Practice as much as possible the preach-
ing of gentleness and love, showing the
character of Christianity. Between the two, when
truly understood, I am persuaded, no
incompatibility. To see which of the two is
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department. An engaging department, it is
certain, can never be inconsistent with clerical
decorum. But when ever the fashion of the
times, or the folly of men would attempt to
build either a barrier or a refinement on the times
of virtue, may we have the times, it is our be-
haviour, so that the man of the world in the
man of God. Finally, brethren, farewell:
Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one
mind, live in love, and the God of love
and peace shall be with you. Amen.

